

AAC HOSTS ANNUAL TRAINING WITH INDUSTRY ORIENTATION WORKSHOP

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Introduction

On July 18, 2002, the Army Acquisition Corps (AAC) hosted its annual Training With Industry (TWI) Orientation Workshop in Springfield, VA, to acquaint 11 new participants with all facets of the TWI Program. Among the attendees were two outgoing TWI participants, representatives from several participating industries, and senior personnel from both the Acquisition Support Center (ASC)—which reports to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology—and the U.S. Total Army Personnel Command's (PERSCOM's) Acquisition Management Branch (AMB).

Program Background

The Army's TWI Program is a 1-year work-experience training opportunity that takes selected officers out of their military environment and exposes them to the latest civilian business practices, organizational structures and cultures, technology development processes, and corporate management techniques. The result is an invaluable opportunity to broaden one's career and to strengthen technical competency, problem-solving skills, and leadership abilities. Commercial participants in the TWI Program are developers of innovative, cutting-edge technologies or established business leaders in their respective fields.

Opening Remarks

Orientation host Jim Welsh, the ASC's AAC TWI Program Propensity Officer, began the workshop with an

agenda overview and introduced COL Mary Fuller, ASC Director and Deputy Director for Acquisition Career Management. Fuller congratulated the new TWI Program participants and noted that officers selected for the program are the "best of the best" and that participating industries are receiving some outstanding individuals. She also encouraged the participants to contact her if they had any comments or questions they might like conveyed to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology or to his Military Deputy. Additionally, she called on TWI Program participants to explain to industry what the Army's about, what transformation is about, and to explain the value of Army/industry teaming efforts. Although the TWI Program is a great opportunity for Army personnel to understand how industry functions, Fuller stated that the program is also designed to explain to industry how the Army does business. She encouraged everyone to maintain contact with their industry counterparts when their TWI assignments are completed. Fuller concluded by urging TWI participants to inform their fellow officers about the value of the TWI Program.

Personnel Management Issues

LTC James E. Simpson, AMB Colonel Assignments Officer, spoke on behalf of new AMB Branch Chief LTC Peggy Carson, who joined the workshop later during the morning session. Simpson discussed personnel management issues such as key acquisition relationships, organizations, and functions; selection board dates and

recent results; career timelines; Officer Evaluation Reports (OERs); Individual Development Plans (IDPs); and certification and AAC membership procedures. Additional guidance was provided on Academic Evaluation Reports and their importance in the promotion process in comparison to OERs. Said Simpson, "Ultimately, the best manager of your career is you."

Ethical Considerations

Al Novotne, Director, Standards of Conduct in HQDA's Office of The Judge Advocate General, provided guidance on ethics and standards of conduct. He discussed rules regarding receipt of gifts from TWI hosts, what constitutes a gift, gifts from prohibited sources, and disposal of improper gifts. He also addressed unauthorized commitments, supplementation of salaries, proprietary information, employment negotiations, and copyrights and patents. He concluded by reminding the participants that, as trainees, they are not official Army representatives and cannot make commitments on behalf of the Army.

Personal Perspectives

FY01 TWI participants CPT(P) Ramona McCaa and MAJ Rich Lonardo provided personal perspectives on their recently completed TWI assignments. In particular, they offered some lessons learned to the new program participants. In addition, they provided insight on how the events of September 11, 2001, impacted their industry hosts.

McCaa termed her experience with Raytheon Systems Co., Tucson,

AZ, as “great,” adding that she enjoyed working in an environment that helped her develop as a professional acquisition officer. Concurrently, she learned about industry business cultures and contract-execution processes that she will take back to the Army acquisition community.

Assigned to Raytheon’s Joint Standoff Weapons (JSW) Program—a joint Navy and Air Force program—McCaa indicated that the events of September 11 definitely impacted her TWI experience. For example, following that date, Raytheon held a major meeting on how best to expedite the production of missiles related to the JSW Program. Additionally, all TWI participants were required to send a detailed weekly itinerary to the U.S. Army Student Detachment (USASD), Fort Jackson, SC. (This was later changed to a monthly requirement.) USASD is a personnel action center for inprocessing, outprocessing, financing, civil schooling, tuition, and textbooks. McCaa noted that USASD personnel were extremely helpful to her and should also be of great assistance to the new TWI participants.

McCaa concluded by offering the following suggestions to the new trainees: become familiar with your company’s acronyms because they are different from the Army’s acronyms, learn as much as you can, volunteer for assignments that others don’t want, get to know your teammates and be a team player, and stay busy.

Next, Lonardo detailed his TWI experience with the General Motors (GM) Truck Group, Pontiac, MI. He said the opportunity to participate in the very competitive automotive industry was a great experience. Like McCaa, he noted that the events of September 11 also impacted his industry assignment. For example, shortly after September 11, GM established a slogan and market plan to “Keep America Rolling.” As part of this strategy, GM also created a finance plan to help energize America’s economy.

Lonardo’s lessons learned included the following: determine if your corporation has professional development requirements for its employees; let your supervisors know exactly what you need to get the job done; understand the language in the corporate world—learn their acronyms and get away from the Army’s; submit your training plan to your boss within 2 days of your arrival because everything that you do during the next year—whether going on temporary duty (TDY) or going to school—must relate to your training plan. He also advised new participants to get a strategic perspective of their company—find out where it is now, where it was in the past, and where it expects to be in the future; observe positive and negative practices; take advantage of formal in-house training; and maintain Army mentorship so they can best apply their TWI experience in the future.

Lonardo further recommended that participants read the book *The Prodigal Soldier*, which traces changes in DOD’s acquisition process from Vietnam up to Desert Storm. He also recommended trainees read at least one book about their company. He concluded by reminding everyone to be timely in submitting their reports and taking their physical fitness tests.

TRICARE Overview

Eileen Mejia, Marketing Director, Northeast Section, TRICARE, provided an overview of the managed health care program for Active duty personnel, retirees, and their families. In addition, she distributed several pamphlets regarding the TRICARE Program and discussed changes to the *2002 TRICARE Prime Remote Guideline*. Mejia provided enrollment forms for personnel in the TRICARE Northeast region and outlined eligibility requirements, enrollment procedures, and benefits. She also discussed the specifics of TRICARE Prime Remote, which addresses the needs of personnel who are in assignments that are geographically distant

from traditional health care installations.

USASD Overview

CPT Pattie M. Showalter, USASD Commander, discussed her detachment’s mission, organization, and capabilities. She also talked about ethics, awards (how they are processed by USASD and PERSCOM), accountability requirements, and procedures for requesting passports.

Connie Scott-Blue, USASD’s primary Agency Program Coordinator, provided information on the government travel charge card, particularly, how to apply for a travel card, its benefits, cardholder responsibilities, and USASD and Bank of America points of contact. She also detailed the process for requesting and attaining authorization to travel on temporary duty.

Reporting Responsibilities

Paula Bettes, Acquisition TWI Manager in PERSCOM’s AMB, outlined TWI Program procedures including responsibilities of PERSCOM, ASC, industry, USASD, and the student. She provided examples of training plans, listed required reports and timelines, and named the various TWI Program points of contact.

Conclusion

The orientation was deemed a great success by virtually all attendees. Jim Welsh thanked all participants, discussed tentative plans for next year’s orientation, and said that next year he hopes to have even more industry participants. He is also considering holding the workshop in April, with *all* TWI officers returning to report their TWI experiences.

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